

Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners

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There is nothing like being an imperial people to make a population conscious of its collective existence as such.¹

Very early in 1737, a strange request came to the attention of the Qianlong emperor, then twenty-five years old and barely twelve months into his sixty-year reign. The request was in a palace memorial submitted by Arsal, a member of the Hanjun Plain Yellow Banner and commander of the Eight Banner garrison at the southeast coastal city of Fuzhou.² Arsal, it seems, wanted to change his name.

He prefaced his appeal by reminding the emperor of an exchange between them during an imperial audience not long before:

The Emperor: You are a Hanjun. Why do you have a Manchu name?

Arsal: My original name was Cui Zhilu. Since the time I was small, I have studied the Qing language [i.e., Manchu], and so I took a Manchu name.

Some time after this meeting, an edict arrived from the emperor, which, though on a different matter, sent Arsal into a complete panic: “Kneeling to receive the sacred edict, your servant was numb. Suddenly I reflected and trembled with fear such that I could not calm myself. I humbly beg the Celestial Grace for permission to change my name back to Cui Zhilu.” The emperor, in his rescript, was mystified: “All I did was casually ask you about your name. Why should you be blamed for taking a Manchu name?”

This exchange, preserved today in the Qing archives,³ is curious for a couple of reasons. Consider first the reaction of the Hanjun bannerman, Cui Zhilu, a.k.a. Arsal. The way he tells the story, Cui was filled with trepidation at receiving the Qianlong emperor’s edict, apparently afraid that the emperor was about to censure him for having taken a Manchu name—the inference

being that in assuming the name *Arsai*, Cui had transgressed some boundary or, at least, feared he had. Cui's apprehension on this account suggests the existence of a prevailing expectation according to which Manchus were to have Manchu names, Mongols Mongol names, and Hanjun Chinese names. More puzzling is the emperor's apparent indifference to Cui Zhilu's name switch.⁴ The absence of an imperial reprimand implies that, as far as the throne was concerned, for a Hanjun to go by an assumed Manchu name was no great crime. Yet from other evidence we know that the Qianlong emperor did not accept with such equanimity the use of Chinese-sounding names by Manchus, striving, on the contrary, to outlaw the practice.⁵ Were certain standards applied to one group and not the other? If so, why? What significance was attached to these names, anyway?

These are not questions we can easily answer at the present.⁶ But for now the terms of Cui's exchange with the emperor would seem to permit two conclusions. One, fairly unproblematic, is that it was common in the mid-1700s to categorize people according to the principal divisions within the Eight Banners, that is, as being either Manchu, Mongol, or Hanjun. The second, more involved, is that these divisions were not simply official designations, but labels that the members of those groups themselves understood to connote normative differences, such as language and naming practices. Having the status of a Manchu, in other words, was more than simply a legal identity (though it was, to be sure, a legal identity, too): it implied the existence—and, at least as important, a belief in the existence—of certain types of “Manchu” practice, “Manchu” behavior, and even “Manchu” character, which ideally were understood to differ from the practices, behavior, and character of Mongols and Hanjun, not to mention that of Han Chinese, who were not even in the Eight Banners.

Of course, as Cui Zhilu's name change proves, these identities were somewhat (though, as we shall see, not infinitely) malleable and in practice impossible to completely police. The reason he gave for becoming “*Arsai*”—that he had learned the Manchu language—suggests Cui's internalization of a predictive, if not infallible, logic of normative identity that went something like this: all Manchus should speak the Manchu language; hence Manchus all *do* speak the Manchu language; therefore all speakers of Manchu are Manchu. According to this logic, since he spoke Manchu, he was entitled, as it were, to the name *Arsai*. This may have been meant to lead others who were not aware of his actual Hanjun status into believing that he was, in fact, Manchu—suggesting that the case of Cui Zhilu is about more than just naming. Indeed, Cui's actions and attitudes raise a number of questions regarding the operation of categories of identity in the Eight Banners, questions that form the subject of the present essay: How should we understand such categories as “Manchu,” “Mongol,” and “Hanjun”? How did they change

over time? How did they come to be constituted in the first place? Did they signify modes of identity we might understand as “ethnic”? What, if anything, does it profit us to interpret them this way?

The answers to these questions matter as much for what they reveal about ethnicity in late imperial China as well as for what they reveal about the role of the Eight Banners in the Qing imperial enterprise. Not that these are entirely separate issues. For while many aspects of the history of the banners remain imperfectly understood, we may be sure of one thing: the importance of the Eight Banners was not limited to what they represented in terms of military force. In administering for over three centuries the coalition of various northern frontier populations that brought off the Qing conquest in 1644, the banners played a central part both in constructing Qing identities and in maintaining Qing power into the twentieth century.⁷ For this reason, it is useful to begin with a short description of what the banners were.

THE EIGHT BANNERS

The Eight Banners (Chinese, *baqi*; Manchu, *jakūn gūsa*)⁸ was the name given to the military elite of the Qing state, led by the Manchus, that conquered China in 1644, and which continued to wage war on behalf of the court for another two hundred years after that. But the Eight Banners was more than just an army; it was also a social formation and a political structure. In fact, the Eight Banners was a hybrid institution in just about every sense. Along with its key military role, it discharged a range of governmental, administrative, economic, and social functions, and encompassed people of many different backgrounds within its ranks: Manchus (originally called Jurchens),⁹ Mongols, Chinese, and Koreans; free and unfree households; soldiers and farmers, wives and slaves, children and old folks, the healthy and the infirm. All these together were “banner people” (*qiren, gūsai niyalma*). Membership in the banners was passed along from generation to generation through the patriline, though it could be acquired also through marriage (women from outside the banners who married in, usually as concubines, became bannerwomen) and adoption (though banner families were strongly encouraged to adopt children of other banner families). Rather than regard the Eight Banners as just an army, then, it makes sense to think of it as a suborder of society defined primarily, but not exclusively, by an inherited duty to furnish professional soldiers of unimpeachable devotion to the dynasty, which in exchange supported the entire population registered in banners both materially and morally, with money, food, and housing, along with privileged access to power, for their entire lives.

The details of the early development of the banner system remain unclear.

The scholarly consensus is that the foundations of the banners lay in the large-scale hunts that doubled as military drill in early Jurchen society, and which had earlier served as the template for the similar *meng-an mou-ke* system under the Jin dynasty five hundred years before. Such hunts relied upon individual discipline and courage as well as on precise coordination of the small contingents into which men were organized. Known as “arrows” (Manchu *niru*, from the tokens held by the leader of each contingent), these groups became the model for the building blocks of a powerful new military organization established by Nurhaci (Qing Taizu, 1559–1626), the man who started the Manchus on their way to Beijing. Nurhaci’s blueprint called for soldiers to be formed into permanent arrows of three hundred men each, with warriors and their households alike registered as members of the arrow (usually translated as “company”). Companies were in turn grouped together into larger units. A *jalan*, or regiment, consisted of about fifteen companies, and four *jalan* (sixty companies, or in principle 18,000 soldiers and their families) made up one *gūsa*. Although the Manchu word *gūsa* referred only to a military unit, not to its flag, because each *gūsa* was distinguished by the color of its flag, it came to be identified in Chinese, and later in English and other European languages, as a “banner.”

The best guess is that the first companies and banners were organized at some point between 1601 and 1607 (possibly earlier), at which time there were only four *gūsa*, which carried yellow, red, blue, and white standards. Strictly speaking, the foundation of a system of eight banners occurred only in 1615, when the four *gūsa* were doubled in number by adding a red border to their flags (red flags had white borders attached). By the time of Nurhaci’s death in 1626, the Eight Banners had achieved a certain level of institutional stability, and they continued to expand steadily under his son and successor, Hong Taiji (Qing Taizong, 1592–1643). On the eve of the conquest in 1644, the Eight Banners claimed an estimated total population in the vicinity of two million people, organized into some 563 companies.¹⁰

From the outset, the company was more than simply a military squad. It took responsibility for all functions essential to the maintenance of a professional military service, including the support of dependents (women, children, parents, and servants) and of sick, disabled, and elderly combatants. It retained these functions—which included supervising military drill, mustering soldiers for campaigns, distributing pay and grain, allocating housing, registering births, marriages, and deaths, enforcing restrictions on employment, residence, and entertainment, paying out pensions, and arranging burials—until the end of the dynasty. Since, in contrast to the old hunt-specific *niru*, the company was a permanent unit, significant authority accrued to the company captain, who held what was in most cases a hereditary position. He was charged with selecting and training soldiers, as well as with overseeing the general well-being of everyone in the company. Even more

power was in the hands of the banner commanders, who included in their number some of the most powerful men around the emperor, so that for the first century of its existence the Eight Banners was thoroughly embedded into the Qing political structure—a little too embedded for the tastes of the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723–35), who instituted a number of changes to ensure that the banners could no longer serve as a power base for any who might try to challenge the emperor's authority.

As mentioned, one of the strengths of the banner system was that it provided the framework for maintaining all of society on a permanent wartime footing. At least as important, it also enabled the state to expand its military might without sacrificing anything in the way of mobilizational efficiency. The Eight Banners was like an umbrella that just kept getting bigger and bigger, accommodating all comers and seeing to their integration into the military, political, and social fiber of the emergent Jurchen state. This integration was “smooth” not only in the sense that an ever greater number of people could be readily added, but also in the sense that the addition of new groups occurred without, so far as we know, creating major internal conflicts. In great measure this was due to the reliance on the company as the basic unit of organization. Because it was relatively small in size, the company lent itself to the flexible incorporation of new adherents, creating enough smaller spaces within the banners for the easy conservation of certain advantageous group formations or for the strategic reshuffling of inimical ones. This quality suited the leadership's general approach, which held that separation, and sometimes even segregation, of different groups was advisable to avoid conflict—the wisdom of which was confirmed after a disastrous mid-1620s experiment in Jurchen-Han joint residence that ended in revolt.¹¹ We may say, then, that one of the most notable features of the early development of the banner system was its increasingly complex hierarchy, with particular niches being found for all kinds of different people.

Differences between people were construed in various ways: on the basis of wealth or family status, on the basis of political loyalty or mode of alliance, or according to military ability or function. From these different kinds of discrimination arose various kinds of hierarchies, which, for reasons of space, will not be described here in detail. One fundamental hierarchy, however, depended on readings of ethnicity, and on this basis, I would argue, the divisions of Manchu, Mongol, and Hanjun arose. But before taking up this subject, I want first to address the doubts of the hesitant reader who is asking, “*What* ethnicity? Was there any such thing in the early seventeenth century?” How one responds to this question depends on how one chooses to define ethnicity and on what conditions one sets before admitting the existence of an ethnic discourse, however defined. Some of these issues have already been raised in the introduction to this volume but deserve further elaboration here.

CONCEPTS OF ETHNICITY

Truly, few terms have come so quickly to enjoy so wide a currency in recent scholarly discourse as have *ethnicity* and *ethnic identity*. Notions of belonging and exclusivity that were once the preserve of ethnographers and sociologists have become part of a broad academic and popular debate over constructions of difference that has tremendous demographic and political ramifications inside and outside the academy. In fact, with nearly everything seemingly subject to dissection along ethnic lines, some might feel that the meaning of the word has been stretched to the breaking point. Understandably, this has led some scholars to question the usefulness of identity as an analytic concept at all.¹² Though such cautions are salutary, I believe that attention to affective modes of social organization is nonetheless an important part of a wider response to perceived inadequacies of both modernization theory and Marxist theory, as well as to a post-1989 world order in which the supposedly universal ideology of the nation no longer appears so persuasive or natural. In fact, it may be that constructions of ethnicity have been far more important in the making of nations than most scholars have previously thought—a point to which I will return in the conclusion to this essay.

One thing that recent work on ethnicity makes amply clear is that one must define one's terms scrupulously, for there are many different ideas of ethnicity in current use.¹³ One of the most common notions holds that ethnic identity typically arises on the margins of the modern nation state, that it is born out of the disenchantment with or alienation from the national (often, formerly imperial) center felt by those on the periphery. Ethnicity, by this approach, is a characteristic of the oppressed and disenfranchised, a collective sentiment that emerges only in the modern context, whereby minority peoples are consciously organized according to categories of putatively common culture and descent, usually (and sometimes expressly) for political ends. Since the majority population in a state cannot, by this definition, itself possess an ethnic identity, one might call this "ethnic food" ethnicity, in reference to the term once used to describe any of a number of cuisines "Italian," "Chinese," "Greek," "Mexican"—of non-Anglo minorities in the United States.

If this is the definition of ethnicity we wish to use, then it is difficult to argue for Manchu ethnicity at any point during the Qing period because the Manchus were the ruling, privileged elite until 1912 and were hardly peripheral or disenfranchised (though many became impoverished). To the extent that Manchus in the provincial garrisons around China became estranged from the imperial court after the Taiping Rebellion, one might be able to say that at least *some* Manchus did come to know an "ethnic" consciousness in the later nineteenth century.¹⁴ Otherwise, we cannot claim that the Manchus became an ethnic group until after 1912, when they were honored with

citizenship and minority status in the new Han Chinese–led Republic of China.¹⁵

Even though it dominates most studies of ethnicity in China, I find the “ethnic food” approach singularly unhelpful in untangling problems of identity in the Qing or earlier periods. Models based on this approach that are intended specifically to describe the formation of ethnicity in China work well enough for what Stevan Harrell calls the “peripheral peoples” of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries,¹⁶ but they work much less well for anything before this—that is, for most of history.

Harrell’s model sensibly posits the central authority of the Chinese state (though he allows there may sometimes be other outside agents, such as missionaries), which aims first to classify and then “culturally transform” (*Ch wenhua*) non-Han peoples, mainly in the frontier regions. The consequent development of an ethnic consciousness is said to be an “almost inevitable result” of their inclusion in the so-called Confucian civilizing project.¹⁷ The main limitations of this model, it seems to me, are two. First, it is widely recognized that cultural transformation was a preoccupation of the state in China for at least two and a half millennia and hardly emerged as a novel idea in the twentieth century, even if the problems it posed looked different to the twentieth-century state.¹⁸ If being joined in some fashion to a civilizing project of the imperial center is what produces ethnicity, then it would seem that ethnicity in China is not a modern phenomenon at all, but one with deep historical roots (which newer scholarship on the Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming is beginning to bear out).¹⁹ The notion that people become aware of “who they are” only in the modern era, with the encroachment of a powerful, omniscient, ordering state, strikes me as giving far too much credit to the totalizing narratives that have been built up around the conceit of the “modern” constitution, so effectively critiqued by Bruno Latour.²⁰

Second, there is the problem that from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth century the civilizing center—namely, the Manchu-led Qing court—was itself “Other” and not Chinese at all. If recent scholarship is correct to insist that the Manchuness of the Manchus was not irrelevant, we need to stop to consider what motivated the “Confucian civilizing project” in the Qing. Indeed, it does not seem that the “Confucian Man’s Burden” advanced by Harrell applied universally under the Manchus. As demonstrated in the chapters that follow, the Qing civilizing center, though at times very “Chinese” in its preoccupation with acculturating peoples in certain parts of the empire, was not consistent in this regard. Unlike, say, the Yao, Miao, Yi, or Zhuang, peoples such as the Mongols, Tibetans, and Turks—not to mention the Manchus themselves—were not on the menu for civilization. They were to remain “raw,” or at least “rare.” This in turn points to a third problem: Must we insist on ethnicity as a product of alienation and marginalization? If so (and even if not), how do we explain the development of ethnicity

among the Manchus, who possessed as keen a sense of their own identity as those who were made the object of forced acculturation? This question is related to the issue of Han Chinese identity, given that who and what the “Chinese” were was by no means any more transparent in the sixteenth or eighteenth century than it was in the twentieth. Did Han share an ethnic identity? If so, how was it produced?

It seems then that, while they may work well enough for the twentieth century, definitions of ethnicity that emphasize subordination in a modern context leave out rather a lot. For the scholar interested in exploring what Homi Bhabha calls the “dialectics of recognition” (or the negotiation of strangeness) in a historical context,²¹ a different approach is required. For China in particular, one cannot help but wonder whether other processes of identity-making than those predicted by the “ethnic food” model were at work. Was participation in the imperial project, with or without the hegemonic objective of cultural transformation, sufficient to encourage the development of ethnic identity? What were the terms of that participation?

The definition of ethnicity adopted here better allows us to get at such questions. It interprets ethnicity more broadly as the social organization and political assertion of difference that is perceived to inhere in culturally bounded descent-based categories. These categories are understood to be historically dependent—in notable contrast to their understanding by members of the ethnos, who typically perceive them (or at any rate are encouraged to perceive them) as essential and primordial. This view of ethnicity derives mainly from the writings of anthropologists who, beginning around 1970, questioned the popular “melting pot” analogy of ethnic interaction, which held that it inevitably brought about assimilation. Studies showing that the melting pot was largely a myth,²² together with the perceived persistence of “identity systems” among such peoples as Jews and Basques,²³ confirmed the need to come up with better ways of conceptualizing ethnic interaction. In a pioneering article, Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth described ethnic identity not as an objective, static, “primordial” *condition* but as a subjective *process* of organizing and signifying identity that could happen anywhere. Furthermore, Barth rejected the long-held notion that contact with a dominant culture necessarily led to the assimilation and incorporation of the minority “ethnic,” insisting instead that ethnic formation was in fact the product of just such contact and opposition.²⁴

This reconceptualization problematized and complicated the “fact” of identity, moving it from the column of “Immutable Givens” to the column of “Contingent Constructions.” It forcefully pointed out the need for new frameworks for analyzing cultural interaction and opened the way for fresh approaches to the problems of how people “know” who they are and what factors contribute to such knowledge. Where Barth emphasized boundary construction to explain how groups differentiated themselves, others, such

as Charles Keyes, focused attention instead on the cultural terms used to construct ethnic identity, stressing the affective, or internal, markers of ethnic membership, as opposed to external, or ascriptive, markers.²⁵ Together, these new analyses opened up the possibility of using ethnicity as a hermeneutic to interpret identity formation for different groups—majority *or* minority—at different times and places. By the 1980s, *ethnic group* had come to be defined as a group that is conscious of its own solidarity, which is marked in ways including, but not limited to, common descent, history, and culture, such a group necessarily constructing itself transactionally, in opposition to groups it perceives as different from itself. Most scholars also agree that the authentic “stuff” of ethnicity (which festivals one actually celebrates, who one’s ancestors really were, which language or dialect one actually speaks) ultimately matters less than the belief in authenticity. It is this belief that powers the perception that “our stuff” is different from “their stuff” and lends weight to the idea that such difference counts for something and that it is socially meaningful.²⁶

This understanding of ethnicity and the ethnic group problematizes a range of issues with significant historical implications, such as how ethnic consciousness is created, what its sources are, and what purposes it is called on to serve. Once we discard the idea that people know who they are in some essential or originary way, and instead accept the notion that ethnic difference is construed through politically and socially charged interpretations of descent and culture, then it becomes difficult to accept that such constructions are somehow particular to the modern age. Ethnicity, like class, gender, and other kinds of “unconscious” social discourse, suddenly acquires history, too. The growing body of scholarship on historical ethnicity, much of it focused on the complex dynamics of borderland areas around the world,²⁷ makes it increasingly apparent that a transactional, constructivist understanding of ethnicity is an extremely valuable tool for understanding the relationship between culture, politics, and social organization in the past.

One might submit one last objection to this whole intellectual project and ask, “But why do people have to think of themselves as *being* anything?” To this question, the answer is simply that they do and always have—because, with very few exceptions, in any world, any society, at any time, there is an Other, forever forcing the issue of who is in and who is out.

THE ETHNIC DIVISIONS OF THE EIGHT BANNERS

On the basis of the second, more inflected, definition of ethnicity just outlined, it is possible to say that the chief divisions within the Eight Banners—Manchu, Mongol, Hanjun—were indeed ethnic. That is, broadly speaking, each of these categories represented formalized perceptions of groups seen as possessing a coherence arising from (putatively) shared descent and cul-

ture and marked by certain (putatively) shared normative characteristics. In this section, I would like to sketch in the articulation, first, of the Manchu banners, and then of the Mongol and Hanjun banners, to show how the separation of people into such divisions (and into companies within them) reflected contemporary ethnic thinking. It will become apparent that these two processes—the growth of the banners on the one hand and the evolution of ethnic thinking on the other—though independent, were intimately linked.

This point of view—that the Eight Banners had a tremendously important influence on the development of its members' ethnic identities—should be distinguished from the view that those identities, like the Eight Banners, were entirely the creation of the state, that they were classifications bearing no relation to “identifiable, preexisting groups with distinct cultures.”²⁸ Given the overwhelming predominance of people in the Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese banners, who, according to labels in use at the time, were identified as (and identified themselves as) Jurchen/Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese, respectively, it seems perverse to deny the commonsense logic behind these principles of organization, all the more so since company divisions invariably respected ethnic affiliation.²⁹ To be sure, there was occasional “bleeding” between categories. But this was precisely *because* they were ethnic, and therefore not hermetic. And though for various reasons the state may, from the historian's point of view, sometimes have played havoc with these distinctions, it did not make them up out of whole cloth. By the same token, individual actors who sought to manipulate ethnic categories could only do so in the context of an already accepted discourse of ethnicity—otherwise there would have been nothing to manipulate. Let us look at these categories one by one.

The Eight Banner Manchus

The Manchu case is a striking example of successful ethnic innovation, and the preservation of relatively plentiful evidence means we can watch this process as it began in the seventeenth century and then trace the evolution of the Manchu ethnos through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries (though this essay will only go as far as the eighteenth). That some of this evidence was written down in the Manchus' own language provides an unusual opportunity to see things from the inside out, so to speak. These sources make plain that even in the early 1600s the Jurchen conception of identity revolved around many of the same things, and worked in the same ways, as ethnicity anywhere. Elements such as language, dress, and ancestry were deployed to make an ethnos out of a disparate assembly of feuding lineages and “tribes.”

The creation and early expansion of the Eight Banners has already been outlined, but it perhaps bears repeating that the banners began as a means of organizing early seventeenth-century *Jurchen* society for war. Jurchens—

not Mongols, not Han Chinese—were the original constituents of the banners, and the Eight Banners was originally seen as an exclusively Jurchen organization. This is borne out, for example, by a 1623 reference to Nurhaci's followers as being comprised of “the banners, the Mongols, and the Han.”³⁰ Only as more and more non-Jurchen groups were incorporated into Nurhaci's supratribal confederation did the banners become an ethnically plural organization. Even then, the most important and most valued group within the banners remained the Jurchens. So who were the Jurchens? How did they become Manchus? And what role did the banners play in the process?

The majority of the Jurchens who inhabited the northeastern frontier of the Ming empire were in all likelihood the descendants of the same people who emerged from the forests of this interstitial zone between Korea, Mongolia, and China to found the Jin dynasty in 1114. Taking over the former Song capital of Kaifeng, the Jin Jurchens ruled over most of the north China plain until they were defeated by the powerful Mongol state in 1234. At that point some Jurchens opted to stay on and serve the new Yuan dynasty as officials and soldiers, but after the Yuan fell in 1368 most who had not already done so returned to their original homeland. They dwelt there as the (mostly) peaceful subjects of the Ming regime until the different groups into which the Jurchens were divided began quarreling among themselves in the later 1500s. The new alliances and configurations of power born out of this strife disrupted Beijing's “divide and rule” strategy and, owing also to shortsighted Ming policies, led to the emergence of a single powerful Jianzhou chieftain who managed to reunite the Jurchen populations settled in the central and eastern portions of the region. That chieftain was Nurhaci.

The story of Nurhaci's rise and the eventual triumph of the dynasty he established has been told many times. Here we are interested primarily in how Nurhaci and his successor, Hong Taiji, created and then used ethnic solidarity to unify the Jurchens as they strove to consolidate and extend their power as khans, first of the Latter Jin (est. 1616) and then of the Qing (est. 1636) dynasties. One important step in the creation of Manchu ethnicity was the construction of what Paul Kroskirty calls a “language regime,” or an ideology of language.³¹ There are numerous statements by Nurhaci, such as his reference to the “*gurun* of the Jurchen tongue,”³² that reveal the importance he placed upon language as a marker of Jurcheness, as something that had the power to set his people apart from others as well as the power to bind them together as a group. At times he spoke of the Chinese and Manchus as “*gurun* of different languages,”³³ or of the Khalkhas and the Jurchens sharing everything except language,³⁴ suggesting an assumption of congruence of language and *gurun*, understandable in this context as “nation” in the older sense of the word.³⁵ The importance Nurhaci attached to what would later be called the Manchu language is also evident in the development of a new script circa 1600, which went far toward elevating its

utility, universality, and prestige, and laid the foundations for a native literature in Manchu. Later on in the Qing, enormous energy would be devoted by the court (and by others as well) to developing the lexical and literary infrastructure of what became known as the “Qing language” (*Qingyu*) or the “national/dynastic language” (*guoyu*) in Chinese, the “language of the Manchus” (*manju gisun*) in Manchu.

Though it was essential to the ethnic project, language was not always an absolute marker. For instance, the Yehe, one of the last Jurchen groups to be brought into Nurhaci’s confederation, spoke a language that was somewhat different from that of other Jurchens, yet they too could still be considered part of the Jurchen nation: “As for the Yehe and ourselves, our speech differs, but are we not of the same Jurchen *gurun*?”³⁶ This quotation from Nurhaci indicates that elements other than language went into the making of the Jurchen nation. These included shared descent (the Yehe were specifically included in a 1613 listing by Nurhaci of the nine lineages [*hala*] that, according to him, made up the Jurchen *gurun*),³⁷ shared territory (defined as the land bounded by Korea on the east, Mongolia on the north, and China on the west),³⁸ shared origins in the Changbai mountains (glorified in the Qing origin myth, in circulation before the conquest, as the homeland of all Manchus),³⁹ along with clothing, food, hairstyle, wedding and funeral ritual, and Spartan lifeways.⁴⁰ None of these by itself necessarily ruled anyone out: Dress or hairstyle could be invoked to emphasize essential Mongol and Jurchen unity, and in the same breath it could be used to distinguish Manchus from Han.⁴¹ But together their constitutive power was great; so great that to a 1636 proposal advocating that his officials adopt Chinese-style clothing, Hong Taiji responded vehemently that this was how the Jin dynasty had fallen centuries before, insisting that the preservation of native clothing style, along with the Manchu language and martial valor, was essential to maintaining power.⁴²

On all these counts—in terms of who they believed themselves to be and in terms of how they believed themselves to be different from others—by the end of the first third of the seventeenth century, the Jurchens resembled what we think of as an ethnic group. Outsiders also perceived them as different and distinct (not always favorably so). The main thing the Jurchen ethnoses lacked was a single, all-encompassing name. For the name *Jušen* not only did not sit well with all Jurchen tribesmen (some of whom still resented Jianzhou overlordship or may not, like the Yehe, have even considered themselves Jurchen), but it also summoned up inconvenient memories of subservience to the Ming. This problem was solved when the new name “Manchu” (*Manzhou*, *Manju*) was applied to the Jurchens in late 1635:

Originally, the name for our people [*gurun*] was Manju, Hada, Ula, Yehe, and Hoifa. Ignorant people call these “Jurchens.” [But] the Jurchens are those of

the same clan of Coo Mergen Sibe. What relation are they to us? Henceforth, everyone shall call [us] by our people's original name, *Manju*. Uttering "Jurchen" will be a crime.⁴³

Manchu was thus not merely a political designation, for it did not comprehend *all* the subjects of the Latter Jin khan. Nor, it should be said, did it include all Jurchens, since some who were counted as "wild Jurchens" were not part of the Manchu ethnos. Rather, *Manchu* was a name intended to cover outstanding differences (political and other) among the Jurchens in the Eight Banners and promote unity among them by emphasizing the relatedness and antiquity of its different constituents.

It did this in part by carving out a distinctive identity for the erstwhile Jurchens, not only vis-à-vis Koreans, Mongols, and Han Chinese, but also vis-à-vis Mongols and Han Chinese in the Eight Banners, who were expressly excluded from the above definition of who the *Manju* were.⁴⁴ The promulgation of the name helped create a sense of unity and collectivity in other ways, too. For by imposing a new name upon all his Jurchen subjects, regardless of their original affiliations or attitudes toward his or his father's imperial ambitions, Hong Taiji aimed to match the affective contours of an emerging pan-Jurchen identity with a single name evocative of an ascriptive unity, much in the same way that Chinggis aimed to create a unitary Mongol identity when in 1206 he christened all his followers "Mongghol" (at the time these included Mongghol tribespeople but also Onggirad, Tayichighud, Kereyid, Naiman, and Merkid). Moreover, by framing matters as he did, Hong Taiji was able to avoid the impression that he was "creating" or inventing anything. Instead, he appeared to be engaged in a rectification of names, reclaiming a pre-existing Manchu identity from the errors of "ignorant people."

The historical record does not seem to bear out Hong Taiji's claims on this score. There is every reason to believe that *Manchu* was an invented name with little prior currency.⁴⁵ But it seems beside the point to argue that because it was a consciously constructed category, *Manchu* was somehow an artificial designation, and therefore not ethnic. For the concept of ethnicity we are working with does not pretend to judge claims of authenticity; it is only concerned with the viability of such claims. On that basis, it hardly seems that the purported artificiality of the name kept it from doing its job, as demonstrated by the survival of the name *Manchu*, and of a people who identify themselves by it to this very day. This is not to mention that, at bottom, virtually all ethnonyms the world over are (or were) "inventions."

The Eight Banner Mongols

At least as impressive as his unification of the Jurchen tribes was Nurhaci's ability to present himself as a viable leader also to Mongol tribes, such as the

Eastern Khalkha,⁴⁶ who recognized his authority as a “player” in Inner Asian politics as early as 1594, when they sent him gifts and engaged in an exchange of brides. Nurhaci’s high standing was confirmed by the title “respected khan” (Mongolian *kündelen khan*), awarded him in 1607 by a visiting delegation of these same Eastern Khalkha, led by Enggeder, son of the Bayaghud prince Darkhan Baghatur Noyan. (Up to this point, Nurhaci had only dared claim the title of “wise prince” [*Ma sure beile*].) These achievements were crucial to the future of the Jurchen confederation if it wished to expand its influence beyond its current borders, or even if it just planned to secure what it had already won. Such plans depended upon neutralizing the potential Mongol threat to the Jurchen western flank by winning political supremacy over the southern and eastern steppe. This was no easy task, as the political situation among the divided Mongol tribes (there was no unified “Mongolia” at this time) was complex and fluid, and Nurhaci faced at least one serious rival in his bid for dominance, Lingdan khan, the last legitimate Chinggisid claimant and the leader of the powerful Chakhar tribes.

Nurhaci met this challenge in four principal ways. First, he offered military aid and political refuge to the Khalkha and other groups, such as the Kharachin, Khorchin, and Tumet, in their quarrels with each other and other Mongols. Second, he made advantageous marriage alliances, most especially with the Khorchin, who boasted blood ties to the Borjigid lineage of Chinggis (the grandmother of the Kangxi emperor hailed from precisely this background). Third, he competed with Lingdan khan in his patronage of Tibetan Buddhism, the primary religion of most Mongols and a crucial source of political legitimacy for many Mongol khans, beginning with Khubilai. Finally, Nurhaci welcomed Mongols into the Jurchen state, using methods of administration like the banner system that were amenable and adaptable to the realities of Mongol society. In doing these things, Nurhaci did more than just set the pattern for the management of relations with the Mongols that endured for most of the Qing. He also broke decisively with any notion that the Latter Jin was exclusively for Jurchens and pushed it inexorably toward the embrace of a concept of universal rule.⁴⁷

The direct incorporation of Mongols into the militarized society of the Latter Jin began in 1622, when Kharachin and other eastern Mongols who came over to Nurhaci (many seeking protection from the Chakhar) were organized into their own *niru* (called in Mongolian *sumun*, with the identical meaning of “arrow”). These were attached to various of the Eight Banners. Some submissions, like that of the Khalkha in 1619 (the Khalkha were not at first organized into companies) and the Kharachin in 1622, involved large numbers of people; the terms of their submission were governed by sworn “treaties” and more resembled alliances than outright recognition of Jurchen hegemony. Other submissions were entirely random. Farquhar described the process as follows: “Small groups of Mongols—consisting perhaps of only a

noble or two, a couple hundred soldiers, their families and livestock, and even a few lamas—would come to the Manchus and ‘surrender,’ putting their services at the disposal of the Manchus and recognizing the Manchu ruler as their khaghan.”⁴⁸ This happened often enough that by the mid-1620s there were forty Mongol companies, warranting their redistribution, five to a banner.⁴⁹ In 1635, when Mongol forces had grown to number around ten thousand, Hong Taiji decided to remove the Mongol companies from the Manchu banners and establish eight Mongol banners, containing a total of eighty companies. Still not wholly independent, the new Mongol banners remained subject to the banner chiefs of the Manchu color-banner of which they were part. Over time the number of companies in the Mongol banners increased, reaching 209 by 1730.⁵⁰ In terms of size, however, the Mongol banners were always the smallest of the three ethnic divisions, their total population (including women and children) numbering no more than about 200,000 at the time of the conquest and a little more than twice that in 1720.⁵¹

It is important to note that in a few instances Eight Banner Mongols were registered in the Manchu, not the Mongol, banners. Such exceptions were not the result of accidental blindness to ethnic difference, but of specific political considerations, such as a wish to isolate certain groups whose affiliation with the Qing had happened under duress and whose loyalties remained questionable. Even in these cases, the logic of ethnic separation continued to be obeyed, but at a lower level, as such people remained within Mongol-only companies shared out among the Manchu banners, where presumably they could be more easily watched over.⁵²

The nature of Mongol identity under Qing rule is a subject that is only now beginning to receive serious attention.⁵³ The early Manchus certainly seem to have felt they shared something with those whom they called “Mongols” (*Ma Monggo*), a label that was loosely applied to all nomadic peoples dwelling northwest of the Jurchen homeland (though not to the Oyirad). Calls for Jurchen-Mongol unity emphasized the similarities of their lifestyle and dress and their shared enmity for the Ming. For instance, when appealing to the Khalkha in 1619 to join him in campaign against the Ming, Nurhaci said, “Only the speech of our two *gurun* is different; in the clothes we wear and in our way of life, we are alike.” And in a similar pitch the next year: “Our two countries are as one. Let our two families live as one. Let us attack the Ming as one.”⁵⁴ It is hard to know whether to take seriously the claim that Jurchen and Mongol ways of life were really the same, since the Jurchen had long lived in fixed settlements and shared little of the pastoral existence typical of Mongols. On the other hand, this may have been a reference to a penchant for life in the saddle that emphasized martial virtue, in which case a common chord could certainly be struck. Whatever their sympathies, with a few exceptions (such as the group Pamela Kyle Crossley identifies as the Hūlun), there does not seem to have been very much confusion between

who was Jurchen and who was Mongol. Partly this was doubtless the result of abiding linguistic differences—it was not unheard-of even in the eighteenth century for Eight Banner Mongols to have a hard time getting by in Manchu—that divided the two groups, and partly also the result of the recognition of wholly distinct histories and genealogies, of which the Manchus were quite well aware because of the immediate relevance of the Mongol imperial heritage to their own imperial project.

It should be pointed out that most Mongols who became subject to Qing authority were governed through a highly elaborate arrangement of banners and leagues that effectively placed them in a colonial relationship—politically, economically, legally—with the imperial center. But this system was entirely separate from the Eight Banners, in which only a minority (about 20 percent) of Mongols loyal to the Qing were enrolled. Eight Banner Mongols, with whom we are concerned here, enjoyed a very different relationship with the throne, and their identity in the Qing world was accordingly distinct. Like Manchus, they had easier access to official position and frequently assumed posts of great responsibility in both the civilian and military administration. Divided between Beijing and the provincial garrisons, they also enjoyed the other perquisites of banner life, including salaries, legal privileges, and so forth. For all that, however, they continued to share the same ethnonym as before and appear, at least in some instances, to have retained empathetic ties to Mongols who remained outside the Eight Banner system and lived in Mongolia. A 1727 case involving the Mongol bannerman Dzungjab, for example, reveals serious tension between Manchu and Mongol bannermen and alludes to pan-Mongol sympathies between Mongols inside the Eight Banners and those outside.⁵⁵

The Eight Banner Hanjun

The development of the Hanjun Eight Banners—composed mainly of Han Chinese households who had joined (or been joined) with the Latter Jin/Qing state—broadly paralleled that of the Mongol banners, except that it took longer and occurred later.⁵⁶ Like Mongol soldiers, allied Han soldiers were initially organized separately and led by their original commanders under close Manchu supervision. However, whereas Mongols were put into their own *niru*-companies fairly early on, this experiment was not attempted with Chinese soldiers until 1637. In addition, while the eight Mongol banners were brought forth at a single stroke in 1635, the Hanjun banners expanded gradually between 1637 and 1642.

The first time the Jurchens tried to raise an army of Han Chinese soldiers to fight for them was in 1621, when one out of every twenty adult Chinese males living under Latter Jin rule was conscripted for military service.⁵⁷ These troops were not put into *niru*-style companies, however, and were disbanded

after the revolt of Liaodong Chinese in 1625. By 1631, a Han army had been regrouped under the name of the “Old Han Troops” (*jiu Han bing/fe Nikan-i cooha*), in part in response to strategic needs, since Chinese knew how to cast and use cannon and were already practiced with muskets. Hong Taiji’s recognition that victory over the Ming would be difficult without this technology helped overcome his doubts about the wisdom of once again placing weapons in the hands of his Chinese subjects. Eight months after casting several large cannon, the Han troops dragged them into battle at Dalinghe, which ended the siege of that city and won an important victory for the Jin.⁵⁸ It is generally believed that the hauling of this massive artillery earned the Old Han Troops the designation *ujen cooha*, “heavy troops,” by 1634.⁵⁹

The Han division created in 1631 was partitioned into six battalions, who drilled and fought separately from the Manchu banners. Some sources refer to them as the first Han “banner,” but this must have referred to the dark blue-green flags under which they were grouped, and not to their incorporation into a *gūsa*-banner. Only in 1637 was the single Han division broken into two and its soldiers and their dependents organized into *niru*-companies on the Manchu model. Even then, Hanjun companies were still attached to the Manchu banners, and the flag patterns of the Manchu and Mongol banners were not yet adopted. In 1639 four divisions of Hanjun companies were established. The number was finally expanded to eight in 1642, when the last companies of Han soldiers and their households were culled from the Manchu banners and instituted as a banner organization separate from and parallel to the other sixteen banners.⁶⁰

The step-by-step creation of the Hanjun banners reflects the uncertainty of Manchu policy toward the Han Chinese (called *Nikan* in Manchu) both before and after the conquest, such uncertainty itself a product of Manchu insecurity in the face of superior Chinese numbers and (very often) attitudes. It also raises the question of who the “Chinese” were at this time; that is, who was recognized and categorized as being “Chinese” and why. The fact is that Han Chinese living under Manchu rule at this time came from many different backgrounds and hardly comprised a homogeneous whole. There were “transfrontiersmen” and those who had defected to Nurhaci prior to 1618; there were captives of the Liaodong and Liaoxi campaigns of 1618–22; and then there were the Ming defectors to Hong Taiji, such as those who surrendered at Dalinghe in 1631 or during the naval engagements of 1633. Many members of the first group were so acculturated to Jurchen ways as to make their distinction as “Chinese” meaningless except in strict genealogical terms, and even then the picture was not always so clear. Some of these people even ended up in Manchu companies. At the other end of the spectrum were members of the third group, who were the least acculturated of all and who remained more or less within their original military divisions even after their integration into the Hanjun banners in 1642.⁶¹

The second group, consisting of those captured in the years of Latter Jin expansion into former Ming territory in Liaodong, was the most diverse and met varied fates. For instance, although a majority of the one million Chinese who came under Latter Jin rule after 1621 were permitted to live more or less as before, virtually all of those captured at Fushun in 1618 and at Mukden the following year became slaves or bondservants, many of the latter being registered in special “flag-and-drum” (*qigu/cigu*) companies attached to the Manchu Eight Banners.⁶² In contrast, the garrison commander who surrendered Fushun to the Manchus, Li Yongfang, was treated extremely well, and the troops he brought with him were all granted freeholder status, outside the banner system.⁶³ Other Ming soldiers, such as Bao Chengxian (who in 1637 proposed that companies and banners on the Manchu model be established for Hanjun troops), and Shi Tingzhu, one of the first Hanjun commanders, both surrendered at the fall of Guangning in 1622 and went on to distinguished military careers under the Jurchens.⁶⁴ Shi was in fact originally from a Jurchen background, but long years of living in the Liaodong pale had acculturated him to Chinese ways. Like Ar sai, Shi’s case is a useful reminder of the fungibility of ethnic identity even when the state begins to try to pin down such categories.

From this brief exposition we can conclude that (a) not all Chinese under Jurchen (later Manchu) rule were enrolled in the banner system; (b) not all the Chinese in the banner system were necessarily Hanjun; and (c) not everyone in the Hanjun banners was necessarily “Chinese.” On the basis of the first two of these propositions it is clear that we cannot draw a direct correlation between Hanjun status and being Chinese. The most we could say is that the Hanjun were a subset of the larger category of “Chinese” (though this reflects a later interpretation of their ethnicity and does not appear to be the way they were perceived in the early seventeenth century), but the third proposition prevents us from doing so. The obvious question is: if, as seems to be the case, the vast majority of people in the Hanjun were ethnically Chinese, why would non-Chinese be classified as Hanjun?

To answer this, we need to know how *Chinese* was defined in early seventeenth-century Liaodong. There appear to be a couple of ways to answer this. One is to deny that “Chineseness” had any cultural component and to say that anyone who was a subject of the Ming was assumed to be Chinese. This definition would have ceased to make sense, though, once large numbers of Ming subjects began coming over to the Latter Jin, and would have had to be understood as referring to anyone who was still a subject of the Ming. Even then, it does not seem to square with statements made at the time about particularistic “difference” of the *Nikan*, who were regarded for a long time as unsuited to the Jurchen way of life (and hence not automatically organized into *niru*, in contrast to Mongol adherents) and as unappreciative of Jurchen rule. For instance, in a 1622 speech Nurhaci sternly

reprimanded his Chinese followers, saying, “You don’t think of the beneficence extended by the khan who has nurtured you, and your failure to handle matters carefully—what [sort of attitude] is this, that getting booty is all there is? We don’t trust you Chinese now.”⁶⁵

The essentializing tone of these remarks leads us to reject *Chinese* as a purely political category and think of it instead as representing an ethnicized rubric—which, just in case it is not already clear, does not mean we accept that the qualities Nurhaci ascribed to the Chinese were *in fact* true, only that we accept that it got seen that way. In this instance, we might conclude that people who ended up in Hanjun (or *qigu* bondservant companies) but who later turned out (or made the claim) not to be Chinese must have appeared “Chinese” at the time—meaning that in their behavior, in their speech, on their bodies, they bore the affective signs of ethnicity we have already been over (language, way of life, names, dress, hairstyle). This accords more or less with the definition of *Nikan* set forth by Crossley, as people who lived like Chinese, spoke Chinese, and lived (I would add here “or had lived”) under Chinese rule. To her contention that ancestry did not figure in this conceptualization of Chineseness, however, I would argue that the assumption of a Chinese surname—which was, as far as we know, universal among the Jurchen who had earlier emigrated to Chinese territory to settle—signified to others the “fact” of their Chinese ancestry.⁶⁶

ETHNIC HIERARCHIES IN THE BANNERS

The preceding section has demonstrated that during the formation of the Eight Banners, although ethnic categories were not immutable (particularly where it concerned Han Chinese who had lived for a long time among the Jurchens), by and large, distinctions of ancestry (real or assumed), language, and culture were respected: Manchus were enrolled in the Manchu banners, Mongols in the Mongol banners, and Ming-frontier Chinese in the Hanjun banners. This was plainly the understanding of the early eighteenth-century Hanjun writer Jin Dechun, who described the Eight Banners in this way: “Each banner is divided into three sections. The tribes that were originally Nurhaci’s . . . make up the Manchu [section]. The various bow-drawing peoples from the Northern Desert . . . form the Mongol [section], while the descendants of people from Liao[dong], former Ming commanders and emissaries, those from the other dynasty who defected with multitudes [of soldiers], and captives are separately attached to the Hanjun.”⁶⁷ In my view, the anomalies we observe in the particular results of this organization do not justify rejection of the idea that ethnic principles were at work in the Eight Banner system, especially since, as already mentioned, ethnically separate groups continued in almost all cases to be registered in separate companies. That is, even though we find ethnic diversity at the level of the ban-

ner (e.g., Han Chinese bondservants attached to Manchu banners, supposed Manchus in the Hanjun banners), we almost never find ethnic diversity within the company, which was a far more important unit in the daily lives of banner people than was the banner itself.

On the other hand, these anomalies do warn against assuming that matters were totally straightforward and that banner ethnicity was in any way transparent (something that the careful reader will already have gleaned from the footnotes to this essay). Since, after the conquest, membership in the banners conferred real privileges and advantages—guaranteed monthly salaries, rice rations, legal immunities, lightened punishment, special prisons, quotas in the examination system, easier advancement to office, and so forth—many who were not in the banners tried to find ways to get in. Those who were already in the system might also strive to shift their identities to take advantage of its internal hierarchies. The Manchu and Mongol banners, for example, received more benefits from the state (for one thing, their soldiers were paid one more ounce of silver per month than Hanjun soldiers), and some color-banners (the so-called Upper Three Banners, i.e., the Bordered Yellow, Plain Yellow, and Plain White) were more prestigious than the rest. On top of this were hierarchies of status, with free households for the most part outranking unfree or servile households. So it appears that there was also a fair amount of movement at these levels, too.

In all such cases, people deployed strategies one often sees in ethnic situations—claiming a certain ancestry, affecting a certain way of life or taking up a certain set of skills, living in a certain place, taking certain kinds of names, speaking a certain language instead of another or speaking a language a certain way instead of another—which amounted to attempts to “pass.” Sometimes such strategies worked, sometimes they didn’t.⁶⁸ That such practices went on, however, signals (as the case of the Hanjun Cui Zhilu cited in the introduction also suggests) that ethnic categories in the banners had real meaning for people and were not state-imposed classificatory schemes with no relevance to popular perceptions. On the contrary, they became part of the vocabulary of ordinary life in the Qing, especially urban life in Beijing, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Xi’an, Guangzhou, and the other garrison cities. Indeed, the institutional line between those inside and those outside the banners represented a fundamental division in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society: “Never mind who is Manchu and who is Han,” the saying went, “but ask who is a bannerman and who is a civilian.”

This popular phrase seems to suggest that internal classifications within the Eight Banners ceased to matter after some point, but closer investigation reveals that this was far from being the case. Though Eight Banner society might have appeared monolithic to those outside its ranks, in fact ethnic distinctions in the banner system remained strong for quite some time. These distinctions perhaps never mattered more than in the mid-1700s,

when, in order to preserve the privileged position of Manchus and Mongols, Hanjun and other groups with lesser privileges in the banners saw their status within the banners decline precipitously. This consolidation, begun by the Yongzheng emperor and completed by the Qianlong emperor, bespoke growing fears of an “identity crisis” among the Manchus. The remainder of this essay takes up this crisis and some of the responses to it. The analysis here has two chief goals: one is to illustrate the importance of the Eight Banners to the evolution of that identity over time, and the other is to demonstrate the heuristic utility of ethnicity in coming to terms with the shifting boundaries of Manchu identity in the eighteenth century.

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MANCHU “IDENTITY CRISIS”

There were two dimensions to the Manchu identity crisis of the eighteenth century. One was the threat to the “Old Way” posed by the temptations of China’s refined culture, and the other was the threat to the banner system itself posed by the growing economic burden the system placed upon the state.

Regarding the threat to the “Old Way,” by 1725 reports on slipping standards of martial ability among Manchu bannermen were already being noted with alarm by the Manchu elite. The fear that acculturation endangered Manchu distinctiveness and dynastic vitality prompted a steady stream of warnings and exhortations to bannermen from the emperor and other Manchu elites to hold on to their self-respect and devote themselves to repaying the emperor’s grace, which they, as Manchus, enjoyed in a more direct and personal fashion than others in the empire.⁶⁹ The following admonition, delivered in 1735 by a garrison commander to his men, is a typical example: “Study hard and learn well how to speak Manchu, how to shoot from a stance and from horseback, and how to handle a musket. Obey established customs and live frugally and economically. All of you have been raised and nurtured in due measure by our divine master [Ma *enduringge ejen*, i.e., the emperor]—you must work hard to repay his great favor!”⁷⁰ A few months after this speech was made, the Qianlong emperor came to the throne. He vigorously seized upon the formulation of the “Old Way of the Manchus” (*Manzhou jiu feng/Manjusai fe doru*), which included ability in the Manchu language, martial skill, and a simple, frugal lifestyle (sometimes also “virility” [Ma *hahai erdemu*]) as a way to rouse the troops.⁷¹ Even though neither the notion of the “Old Way” nor concern for its disappearance began with Qianlong, he was unquestionably its most tireless advocate.

Yet the emperor’s appeals went largely unheeded. The court depended upon (or believed it depended upon, which amounted to much the same thing) the strong support of bannermen, especially Manchu bannermen, who provided crucial talent at the top ranks of both the civilian and military administration, and so was in no position to enforce its own ethnic ideal by,

say, threatening expulsion from the Eight Banners of those who failed to comply with its demands that they leave off with the Chinese poetry readings and strengthen their bow arms instead. In the end, if the customs and practices of the court-sponsored Manchu ideal were regarded by more and more Manchus as obsolete, the emperor could do little but wring his hands—which he continued to do, right through the eighteenth century, to no avail.

The other dimension of the eighteenth-century crisis, the economic threat to the future of the banner system, is much less studied, and so receives greater attention here. It inspired a different reaction from the court, which set about rewriting the rules for banner registration that began in 1723 and lasted until 1740. The reforms have usually been interpreted solely in economic terms, and certainly financial considerations played a large part in their adoption, given that by 1730 something close to one-quarter of the state's annual budget was going to the upkeep of the Eight Banners.⁷² However, since the reforms meant deciding who was Manchu and who was not, they should also be understood as a reinforcement of ethnic boundaries, that is, ascriptive identity, within the banner system. This was very important at a time when, as just described, affective identity appeared to be under threat. Furthermore, the Eight Banners generally, and the Manchu banners especially, were regarded as the “foundation of the nation [or dynasty]” (*guojia zhi genben/gurun-i fulehe da*). Behind the court's determined effort to “purify” the banners and preserve Manchu privileges for “real Manchus” loomed matters of identity linked closely with political concerns. The same was true of the move to discharge large numbers of Hanjun from the banners and return them to the Chinese society from which they had supposedly come.

The campaign to clean up banner ranks was, not too surprisingly, the brainchild of the energetic and fiscally conscientious Yongzheng emperor. By the time he took the throne, it was widely recognized that not everyone who claimed a certain status in the banners was really entitled to that status and that many people were fraudulently collecting salaries rightfully owed regular bannermen. With the livelihoods of “real” Manchus thus imperiled, the court tried to tighten access to banner privilege by requiring genealogical proof of Manchu ancestry and curtailing the privileges accorded (or usurped by) other groups of intermediate household status. These groups included, for instance, bannermen who had set up quasi-independent households but who had no post that would qualify them for regular status, as well as households of former bondservants and slaves who had been rewarded with semi-independent status for valor in battle or other distinction in service.⁷³ The former were called “detached households” (*linghu/encu boigon*), the latter, “entailed households” (*kaihu/dangse araha boigon*).

Though both of these kinds of households maintained dependency upon a regular household, the nature of this dependency differed. Detached households were made up of descendants of regular Manchu (or other) ban-

nermen, enjoying all the legal rights conferred by this primary status. Because of their unfree origins, entailed households, on the other hand, were still considered inferior and had no such privileges. Confusion between these two types of status grew during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as the population rose and the number of companies more than doubled. Such confusion was not always accidental. By falsely claiming regular (*zhenghu/jingkini boigon*) or detached status, entailed households were able to circumvent a 1704 prohibition on their taking regular military posts.⁷⁴ They were abetted in false registration by regular households eager to improve their general finances, since when there was no male heir, getting someone of servile status, such as a bondservant (or his son), into a soldier's uniform could mean the deliverance of the main household from ruin. It seems that many a Manchu widow was supported by the salary earned by a bondservant who had been permitted to take her husband's or son's post.⁷⁵

To ensure Manchu access to the positions that were rightfully theirs, Yongzheng ordered the collection of information on the composition of banner households and the compilation of new family registers in order to find out who was authentically Manchu (or Mongol, or Hanjun), who was originally a slave or captive, and how many of the latter were being paid soldiers' salaries.⁷⁶ In the process of carrying out this census, the detached-household (*linghu*) category presented a difficult problem, as it contained households of both "free" and "mean" status. In 1729 the court decided to make a distinction. Detached households that were split off from regular banner households were still permitted to hold this status after the facts of their origin had been established. But households discovered originally to have been of bondservant or slave status were given the new administrative label of "separate-register households" (*lingji dangan hu/dangse faksalaha-i boigon*). Confirmed detached households were eligible for appointments and all the other privileges that were enjoyed by regular Manchus, whereas separate-register households, though of superior status to entailed households, were not. Employment as regular soldiers of men from any of these secondary-status categories was prohibited by new decrees of 1726, 1727, 1738, and 1741.⁷⁷ The culmination of the process took place in 1756, when all these groups (excepting detached households) were ordered out of the banner system and made to register as civilian Han Chinese.

By making the different subgroups in the banner system more readily and surely identifiable, the court's cleanup assured the priority of regular and detached household bannermen to paying positions as soldiers and officers. And by ensuring that Manchu hereditary rights were being passed to other Manchus, even if they were not blood relations, the court tried to halt what it saw as the immiseration of Manchus by the Chinese. This process appears to have achieved these goals fairly successfully, which may have encouraged the court to pursue it to its logical conclusion: the expulsion of the Hanjun.

Though the court's old bias against the Chinese soldiers in its midst had diminished during the early Kangxi reign, one century after the conquest, official attitudes toward the Hanjun had decisively soured.⁷⁸ Determined to carry out further streamlining of the banner system, and frustrated at what they saw as the incorrigibility of many Hanjun, by the middle of the eighteenth century some officials were openly suggesting that Hanjun bannermen were in reality Han Chinese who had no grounds for remaining in the banner system. As one wrote, "Some Manchus who have been living in the provinces for a long time face difficulties, but the Hanjun are different from the Manchus. They are originally Chinese (Ch *Hanren*)."⁷⁹ In an edict of 1742, the Qianlong emperor let it be known that he concurred with this view of the Hanjun.⁸⁰ No longer were they "people of the banners," individuals of distinct origin and part of a higher legal and social order. Instead, they were simply Chinese with peculiar family histories—the descendants of those Chinese who went over to the Qing first, nothing more and nothing less. From here it was only a short step to the elimination of many Hanjun households from the banners altogether, though this affected primarily the provincial garrisons. After first testing the waters by permitting Beijing's Hanjun to leave the banners if they wished (almost no one did), in 1754 the court discharged the Hanjun bannermen at the Fuzhou garrison, at the same time permitting them to relocate and take up whatever occupation they pleased. (Unfortunately, we have little information on the choices they made, except that many joined the Green Standard army.)⁸¹ Unsalariated Manchu and Mongol soldiers were transferred from Beijing to take the posts that were left vacant. "Truly both sides benefit," went the edict: "Manchus from the capital get some relief, and Hanjun from the garrison get freedom to choose their way of life."⁸²

The expulsion of the Hanjun was a process that lasted almost twenty-five years. Besides Fuzhou, it involved households from Jingkou, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Suiyuan, Liangzhou, Zhuanglang, and Xi'an. Exact totals are elusive, but by the time the "repatriation" of Hanjun ended in 1778–79, between ten thousand and fifteen thousand soldiers had lost their jobs. Counting entire households, the population supported by the Hanjun banners was reduced by well over a hundred thousand people, and possibly as much as twice this figure, since there seem to have been an unusually high number of dependents in these banners.⁸³ More than any other group in the Eight Banners, Hanjun identity was dependent upon the institutional framework of the banners; it was now greatly weakened. Nonetheless, because their ranks in Beijing remained relatively untouched by these changes,⁸⁴ the Hanjun did survive.

In its barest outlines, the Manchu identity crisis presents the historian with the following problem: granting that the cultural "stuff" of Manchuness was

fading fast as the third and fourth postconquest generations came of age, the court (and even many not-so-elite Manchus) confronted the problem that ordinary Manchus would eventually lose their distinctiveness from the mass of Han Chinese. In response to this, efforts were made to reinvigorate Manchu ethnicity from within by calling for individual rededication to the ideals of the “Old Way.” We know that this program was by and large a failure. Yet we also know that Manchu identity did not disappear. The question, then, is the following: If Manchu identity had really and truly been bound up with speaking Manchu, riding horses, and living an unadorned, spartan existence, then why did it not disappear? And if it was not bound up with those things, then how *did* it survive?

Part of the answer is that those affective elements of Manchu identity never disappeared altogether, in fact. Even in the later nineteenth century, Manchus in the banners retained a fair number of distinctive cultural markers that made it hard to mistake them for Chinese. Their names, for example, were distinctive, and Manchu women did not bind their feet.⁸⁵ But an even more important piece of the explanation for the survival of the Manchu ethnos was the successful preservation of the Eight Banners, which provided the institutional framework that sustained the distinctive Manchu lifestyle.

The eighteenth-century court never tired of promoting the ideals of the Old Way. Yet, as shown, it also was careful to take the steps necessary to ensure the survival of the banner system. It was the institutionally defined elements of banner life, along with the remnants of the Old Way, that, from the eighteenth century on, came to define who the “Manchus” were. Not for nothing were they being called “bannerpeople” (*qiren/gūsai niyalma*) as early as the 1730s.⁸⁶ The program of genealogical vetting begun by the Yongzheng emperor suggests that descent was being invoked (not for the first time) as a central consideration in determining who was legitimately Manchu and who was not. But we should not lose sight of the fact that this program occurred within the compass of the banner system. It was at this moment, I would argue, that the banners went from being a universal Qing institution to being a more exclusively Manchu institution. The Hanjun experience makes this point clearly, since Hanjun who left became Chinese (*Hanren*), while those who stayed became, more than ever, “bannermen.” If at that point they were halfway toward becoming Manchu, they would cover the rest of the distance in the 1900s, when their descendants would be formally recognized by the modern Chinese state as members of the “Manchu nationality” (Ch *Manzu*).

Much more work needs to be done on the operation of ethnic categories within the Eight Banners, in particular on the convergence of “Manchu” and “bannerman” (and “bannerwoman”)⁸⁷ identity during the Qing. Even from where our knowledge stands now, though, there can be little question but that the banner system fundamentally shaped and reshaped Manchu, Mon-

gol, and Hanjun ethnicity, along with Han Chinese ethnicity. Though it could not revitalize the moribund performative ideal of seventeenth-century Manchuness, the eighteenth-century Qing court's efforts to shore up the institutional structure of the banners by reinforcing ethnic hierarchy and re-drawing status boundaries between household types must be regarded as a success. Indeed, the Eight Banners continued to limp along after 1911 until the rump imperial court was evicted from the palace in 1925. However, as I have tried to show, this project was much more than just another case of mid-dynastic reform. It was an act of ethnic (re)definition and, ultimately, of ethnic salvation. True, the Manchu ethnos in the 1700s (in part because of the very lifestyle imposed by the banners) was not what it had been in the 1600s, nor was it yet what it would become in the 1800s or 1900s. Yet throughout this period the label *Manchu* remained a highly visible part of a larger discourse of identity found throughout the empire. Adopting a historically inflected understanding of ethnicity allows us to see how both the category *Manchu* and the distinctive identity associated with it could be sustained over three centuries, even as it was transformed in substantive ways in and through the Eight Banners; to see how, even as the supposedly primordial qualities of the Manchu ethnos were replaced by other qualities that had little to do with court ideals, such qualities nevertheless managed to continue to set the conquering population apart and to give that population, and the conquered, an enduring sense of who the "Manchus" were and what being "Manchu" meant.

NOTES

1. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 38.
2. The Fuzhou garrison, manned by about two thousand soldiers from the Hanjun banners, was one of nineteen garrisons the Qing established around the Chinese provinces to assist in maintaining local control.
3. *Qianlong hanwen zhupi zouzhe*, QL1 packet, Arsai, QL1.11.26, First Historical Archives, Beijing. All archival materials referred to in the notes are from these holdings. Following the classification system there, I will cite documents by reign (KX = Kangxi, YZ = Yongzheng, QL = Qianlong), language, (Ha = Chinese, Ma = Manchu), document type (ZPZZ = *zhupi zouzhe* [palace memorial]), packet (bao) number, memorialist, and date.
4. This encounter with the emperor did not affect Arsai's career progress in the slightest (nor does he ever seem to have followed through on changing his name back to Cui). A few months after sending the memorial cited here, he became garrison general at the Guangzhou garrison. In 1743 he was named governor-general of the important Huguang region in central China, where he served for one year before being promoted to president of the Board of Revenue, a post he held until his death two years later, in 1745. See entries in Qian, *Qingdai zhiguan nianbiao*.
5. For instance, in a 1740 edict to the Imperial Clan Court, the emperor ordered

a stop to Han-style naming practices among the imperial clan members, a decree that was disseminated among the Eight Banners generally. *Da Qing Gaozong chun* [*Qianlong*] *huangdi shilu*, 115: 29b–30a.

6. An extremely useful source for studying the names of Manchu bannermen is Stary's *A Dictionary of Manchu Names*.

7. This argument is advanced, in very different ways and with different emphases, in a number of recent books, the most important being Rawski, *The Last Emperors*; Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*; and my own *The Manchu Way*. An excellent study of the banner institution in the later Qing is Rhoads, *Manchus and Han*; see also Crossley's pioneering *Orphan Warriors*.

8. For ease of reference by specialist readers, an effort is made to provide original equivalents when terms are first introduced. Chinese language terms are denoted by "Ch," and Manchu language terms by "Ma." When both are given, the Chinese term comes first.

9. The groups that united to form the Manchus were called Jurchen (Nüzhen/Jusen) until 1635, when the name *Manchu* was adopted. The origin and meaning of this word remain unclear.

10. For a more detailed account, see Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 39–63; see also the introduction to Kanda et al., eds., *The Bordered Red Banner Archives in the Tōyō Bunko*.

11. This episode is well described in Roth, "The Manchu-Chinese Relationship, 1618–1636," 4–38.

12. See, for example, Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond Identity." Of course, if one insists on a word for ethnicity in the seventeenth century in order to speak of "ethnic" (as opposed to, say, "cultural") difference, then there is admittedly not much to talk about. The English word *ethnicity* is itself barely fifty years old, and the Chinese words that correspond to it only arose in the 1990s.

13. I do not claim the schematization here to be an exhaustive analysis of the different interpretations of ethnicity. Fuller analyses may be found in Tilley, "The Terms of the Debate"; and in Eller, "Ethnicity, Culture, and the Past." See also the thorough study of Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*.

14. This is part of the central argument of Crossley's *Orphan Warriors*.

15. Rhoads, for instance, dates the transformation of the Manchus from an "occupational caste" to an "ethnic group" to 1949, seeing this process as really getting under way in the 1920s (*Manchus and Han*, 284, 289). This would suggest that Rhoads's definition of *ethnic group* is close to that of *minority nationality*. Yet at a number of points in his analysis (e.g., 19, 24, 39, 45) he makes use of the term *ethnic* to describe the Manchus or the principles of banner organization during the Qing, which suggests, to the contrary, that "ethnicity" (or something very much like it) was around long before the twentieth century.

16. In preference to the more common "minorities" or "minority nationalities." Harrell, *Cultural Encounters*, 3.

17. Harrell, *Cultural Encounters*, 29. Note, however, the contrasting views of Wang Gungwu, who argues for a weak civilizing urge in China; see "The Chinese Urge to Civilize," 145–64.

18. Hon Tze-ki, "Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism."

19. See, inter alia, the following dissertations: Abramson, "Deep Eyes and High Noses"; Skaff, "Straddling Steppe and Sown"; Brose, "Strategies of Survival"; Swope,

“The Three Great Campaigns of the Wanli Emperor, 1592–1600”; and Elverskog, “Buddhism, History, and Power.”

20. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

21. Bhabha, “On the Irremovable Strangeness of Being Different,” one of “Four Views on Ethnicity,” 34.

22. The landmark study is *Beyond the Melting Pot* by Glazer and Moynihan.

23. Spicer, “Persistent Cultural Systems,” 795–800.

24. Barth, “Introduction,” 9–38.

25. Keyes, “Towards a New Formulation of the Concept of Ethnic Group.”

26. Apart from common descent, other characteristics that ethnic groups often use in “gateposting” identity include: a common name for the unit of population; a set of myths of common origins for that population; some common historical memories of things experienced together; a common “historic territory” or “homeland,” or an association with one; and one or more elements of a common culture—language, customs, or religion. See Anthony Smith, “The Origins of Nations.”

27. See, for instance, the review essay by Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders,” 814–41.

28. Naquin, *Peking*, 371. In the note to this point, Naquin adds, “For the period before 1644, it seems advisable to follow her [Crossley] and think of these as categories for primary speakers of Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese.” I have no quarrel with this. But doing so would seem to undermine the idea that these categories were arbitrary political fictions imposed by the Qing state and support the view that the Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese banners were indeed based on current perceptions of ethnic difference, of which language (as I show below) was an important, though certainly not the only, element. I see no reason to reject the application of the term *ethnic* to these categories simply because the state had a hand in shaping them. If we accept that there is nothing inherently “natural” about ethnicity in the first place, then why should we object or be surprised if the state gets involved in constructing it? It would be more surprising if it did not.

29. More on this issue is found in Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 408 n 176.

30. *Manbun rōtō/Tongki fuka sindaha hergen-i dangse*, Kanda et al., Taizu II, 651, 734. Hereafter cited as MBRT.

31. Kroskirty, ed., *Regimes of Language*.

32. MBRT Taizu I, 189.

33. MBRT Taizu I, 202.

34. MBRT Taizu I, 160.

35. For a discussion of the term *gurun* and Manchu ideas of the “nation,” see Elliott, “Manchu (Re)Definitions of the Nation in the Early Qing,” 46–78.

36. MBRT Taizu I, 47.

37. MBRT Taizu I, 37–38. Crossley has forcefully argued that “the idea that ‘blood’ had anything at all to do with being a Manchu arises from a reading back of later Qing racial taxonomies to a time and place in which they did not yet exist” (*A Translucent Mirror*, 48). If “blood” implies shared descent and if lineages can be understood as structures of shared descent, then the reader must judge for himself whether in fact “blood” was entirely irrelevant in the imagination of early Qing categories of identity. Crossley herself acknowledges that “the earliest Jurchen/Manchu and Mongol companies were created on the basis of lineage units” (*A Translucent Mirror*, 118 n

63) and states further, with reference to the period under Nurhaci, that “the lineages were and continued to be the link with the Manchu past” (*A Translucent Mirror*, 203). Her statement (194) that “genealogical affiliation” was one of the criteria according to which Manchu identity was to be fixed under Hong Taiji, or that there was a “new wave of genealogizing” ca. 1654 (111), raises additional questions about the degree to which a concern with “blood” represents a reading back of “late Qing taxonomies.”

38. MBRT Taizu I, 384.

39. On the Manchu homeland, see Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary.” On the origin myth, see Matsumura, “On the Founding Legend of the Ch’ing Dynasty,” 1–23, and “The Founding Legend of the Ch’ing Dynasty Reconsidered,” 41–60.

40. See the more detailed discussion of these elements in Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 46–45 and 65–70.

41. MBRT Taizu I, 160, 192, 211.

42. *Jiu Manzhou dang*, 5295. See also Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 276–77.

43. *Kyū Manshū tō tensō kyūnen*, in Kanda et al., *The Bordered Red Banner Archives*, vol. 2, 318. For a fuller explication of this passage, and the identity of “Coo Mergen Sibe,” see Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 71 and notes.

44. In a 1995 essay, Shelley Rigger asserts that everyone who came over to Nurhaci’s side before 1623 was enrolled in a banner and identified as a Jurchen (“Voices of Manchu Identity,” 189). It is hard to see how the record supports this statement. Neither Mongols nor Han Chinese were ever wholly integrated into the Manchu banners; even when formally included within a Manchu banner, their organization into separate companies was consistently maintained and with a very few exceptions (usually relying on the discovery of or creation of genealogical ties to a Jurchen lineage) were never recognized as Jurchen. However, I would quite agree with Rigger that shared identity as conquerors was one of the things that helped cement Manchu ethnicity, though I would not go as far as she does in insisting that the conquest experience was the only thing that bound the Manchus together.

45. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 71 and note.

46. That is, the “Five Tribes of Khalkha” (*tabun otoh Khalkha*), referring to the Jarud, Bagharin, Bayaghud, Khunggirad, and Üjiyed, as distinct from the Khalkha of what would become “outer” Mongolia, who were known as the “Seven Tribes of Khalkha” (*dolughan otoh Khalkha*). See Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia,” 15.

47. The evolution of “universality” as a component of Qing ruling ideology is given a fascinating dissection in Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*.

48. Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia,” 22.

49. This account relies on Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian falü zhidu shi*, 263–99. As mentioned earlier, all banners at this time were “Manchu” banners.

50. Fang, “A Technique for Estimating the Numerical Strength of the Early Manchu Military Forces,” 207.

51. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 364.

52. For details on how such arrangements came about, see Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 74.

53. See Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 205–15 ff., and her essay in this volume; also forthcoming work by Johan Elverskog and Ellen McGill.

54. MBRT Taizu I, 160, 237–38.
55. YZMaZPZZ 97, Nian Gengyao, YZ 3.3.9.
56. For a different account of the Hanjun, the reader is referred to Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, 88–128.
57. Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian*, 301.
58. Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 189.
59. This hypothesis was first advanced by Ura in “Kangun (ujen cooha) ni tsuite,” 815. Responsibility for cannon appears to have belonged to the Han troops of the 1620s, too, who were known by the less elegant label, “cannon-carrying Chinese troops” (Ma *poo jafaha Nikan i cooha*). MBRT Taizu II, 734. Crossley has recently called this standard interpretation of *ujen cooha* into question; her suggestions as to its origins may be found in *A Translucent Mirror*, 96 n 20.
60. Yao, “Manzu baqizhi guojia chutan,” 112–14.
61. See Zhao Qina, “Qingchu baqi Hanjun yanjiu,” 59; Hosoya, “The Han Chinese Generals Who Collaborated with Hou-Chin Kuo,” 26.
62. Spence, *Ts’ao Yin and the K’ang-hsi Emperor*, 35; Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 84.
63. Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian*, 299–300; Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 61.
64. Zhang and Guo, *Qing ruguanqian*, 300, 311–12; Kanda, “Shinsho no kangun bushō Seki Teishū ni tsuite.”
65. MBRT Taizu II, 467.
66. *A Translucent Mirror*, 91–92. On the importance of surnames, see Ebrey, “Surnames and Han Chinese Identity.”
67. Jin, *Qijun zhi*, 1a–b.
68. Some examples are cited in Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 325, 329.
69. This point is elaborated in Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 164–71.
70. YZMaZPZZ 527, Arigūn, YZ 13.4.2.
71. For an analysis of this terminology, see Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 8–11.
72. The calculations for this estimate are presented in Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 306–11.
73. Hosoya, “Shinchō chūki no hakki kosekihō no henkaku.”
74. Hosoya, “Hakki shinchō kokōsatsu no seiritsu to sono haikai,” 26.
75. YZMaZPZZ 434, Ilibu, YZ 3.7.21. The memorial cites an edict from the Kangxi era permitting such arrangements but gives no date.
76. In response to the court’s call, genealogies (there were two types, one clan-centered, the other company-centered) began to be received as early as 1725. These documents provided the basis for large sections of the *Baqi tongzhi (chujī)* (General History of the Eight Banners, first edition), published in 1739, and the *Baqi Manzhou shizu tongpu* (Comprehensive Genealogy of the Eight Banner Manchu Clans), published in 1744. The impetus for both publications originated under the Yongzheng emperor.
77. An exception was households of foster sons (*yangzi/ujihē jui*) of regular bannermen. This was yet another category, introduced in 1734 (Hosoya, “Hakki shinchō kōkōsatsu,” 24). These households seem to have been allowed postings some of the time, but neither they nor other secondary bannermen could participate in the examination system.
78. See Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 335–37.
79. Sun Jiagan, “Hanjun shengji shu,” 35: 9a–b.

80. Ura, “Kangun ni tsuite,” 842; Wu Wei-ping, “The Development and Decline of the Eight Banners,” 147.

81. One reference (for the Jingkou garrison) says that about one-third of banner-leavers chose to register as civilians in the local *bao-jia* (*Gaozong shilu* 680, 20a). The rest presumably became Green Standard soldiers.

82. *Gaozong shilu* 459, cited in Ding Yizhuang, *Qingdai baqi zhufang zhidu yanjiu*, 185–86.

83. See Elliott, “Bannerman and Townsman,” 45–46; and Ding Yizhuang, *Qingdai baqi zhufang*, 185–88.

84. Although in 1757 came a decree that those in the capital who were “aged or maimed, unable to engage in service, or whose service is mediocre and cannot be improved, are ordered to become civilians” (Wu Wei-ping, “Development and Decline,” 149).

85. More details on the cultural divide between Manchus and Han are given in chapter 1 of Rhoads, *Manchus and Han*; see also Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, chapter 6 ff.

86. Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 133.

87. I present a gendered analysis of Manchu identity in “Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China.”